

Testimony: LaVerne Thomas 3627 Texas Ave S.E., Washington, DC 20020

As a member of the Penn Branch Community and Penn Branch Civic Association, (PBCA) I am in favor of the development of the Penn Branch Shopping Center and soon to be Penn Hill. I'm also in favor of a mixed-use project that is comprised of ~~middle income families~~. However, I'm not in favor of the "Workforce Housing, which supports low to moderate income families."

As a long-time resident of Penn Branch, I've waited for years for businesses to return or invest in this community. I can recall when Penn Branch Shopping Center was a vibrant business center that housed a Safeway, Sabin's Record Store, Lawrence Reed Men's clothing store, Philipsborn Women's clothing store, Highs Ice Cream store, a Beauty Salon, Dental and Doctor's Offices and a drug store just to name a few. Penn Branch was a first of its kind back in the 60's.

One of my most memorable favorites was the Pizza Shop where we could hang out in a safe environment with our friends after school. We all knew the owner and he knew us by our names. That's the kind of business relationships I'd like to see again in our neighborhood. I had friends that had after school and summer jobs at some of these establishments. They supported us, and we supported them.

But as shopping malls and larger shopping centers began to rise we saw some of those businesses take flight. While we saw a change or a decline in the shopping center for whatever reasons, there has not been a decline in the Penn Branch Community. We have remained a close-knit community with families reinvesting in the neighborhood they grew up in. For many years Penn Branch has remained one of DC's best kept secrets. A place full of families that support and look out for one another.

While Penn Branch understands growth and change, we insist on progress that does not diminish but adds value and compliments this community. So to that end the expectation and vision for this community is something greater than its original no more no less.

Thank you,

LaVerne Thomas

